



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

approaching to within sixty yards of one of them. This was within chance range of my 20-gauge shotgun and, in fact, my gun was at my shoulder. But I did not pull the trigger, for here was one of the only two egrets on this bird sanctuary, possibly one of the only two in the state of Arizona, and they were probably breeding birds. These egrets, however, were exceedingly wary and usually remained well out on the mud flats where they were fairly safe.

Nycticorax nycticorax naevius (Boddaert). Black-crowned Night Heron. Swarth (*loc. cit.*, p. 54) considered the Black-crowned Night Heron less abundant on the lake than the Great Blue Heron, and reports seeing "perhaps 20 birds, all told." My own observations, as recorded directly from my field reports, are: "The most abundant, though probably the least conspicuous, bird on the lake, usually nesting in living cottonwoods partly submerged in the water on the flats. About 120 pairs nested at the Tonto end of the lake (May 20-24) and about 80 pairs (May 26) at the Salt River end. Young in most cases were able to leave the nests and perch on branches, or fly. Some ten nests were seen in dead trees, all others being in trees bearing green leaves."

Fulica americana Gmelin. Coot. There were between ninety and one hundred Mud-hens on the Tonto end of the lake, but not one was noted at the Salt River end. A male, collected May 20, had very small testes and apparently was not breeding.

Actitis macularia (Linnaeus). Spotted Sandpiper. A single individual of this species was seen on two occasions (May 20 and 22) on the shore near the mud flats at the Tonto end of the lake.

Oxyechus vociferus (Linnaeus). Killdeer. Some six or eight Killdeer were observed on the mud flats at the mouth of Tonto Creek, May 22.

Pandion haliaëtus carolinensis (Gmelin). Osprey. Ospreys were seen daily (May 19-29) near Roosevelt Lake, where a dozen or more birds obtained food.

Aluco pratincola (Bonaparte). Barn Owl. A Barn Owl was seen, May 20, perched peacefully among a colony of twenty-seven cormorant and eight great blue heron nests containing young, in the top of a dead cottonwood over thirty feet of water and 300 yards from the nearest shore. So far as I could observe, it had not disturbed the rookery in the least.

Bubo virginianus pallescens Stone. Western Horned Owl. A nest, containing two young fully one-third grown and able to perch on limbs of the tree near the nest, was located in the top of a partly dead cottonwood well out in the water at the Tonto end of the lake (May 20).

U. S. Biological Survey, Washington, D. C., September 29, 1921.

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

On the Occurrence of the Buffle-head at Eagle Lake.—The notes under the above caption by Milton S. Ray in the November *CONDOR* require some comment. The bird in the first photograph is undoubtedly a female Buffle-head (*Charitonetta albeola*), the young ones following her are indefinite. The two downy young "Buffle-heads" in the other photograph (fig. 33) are obviously and emphatically American Mergansers (*Mergus americanus*), newly hatched. The markings on their heads together with the shape of their bills are both unmistakable, and quite unlike a downy Buffle-head.

Young ducks frequently follow an adult of another species. I have seen a female Buffle-head and a female Barrow Golden-eye both guarding a single duckling of the former species and both equally solicitous. At another time I watched a newly hatched Spotted Sandpiper trotting after a Least Sandpiper while its own parent was a considerable distance away.

Of course it is more than possible that the Buffle-head breeds in northeastern California, but unfortunately Mr. Ray's record fails to prove this, nor does he seem to realize what an extraordinary phenomenon was before him when he saw *both* parents attending the young. In the case of very aberrant ducks like *Erismatura* and *Dendrocygna* the male parent may assist as in all the geese and swans; also I believe there have been instances of some southern ducks, the Cinnamon Teal for one, that have been

seen with both male and female in attendance on the young brood. But after a lifetime spent among wild ducks I have yet to see the first indication of any solicitude for the young on the part of the male of any species.

In the case of the Buffle-head the males have totally disappeared (apparently all leave the country entirely) before the first broods of young are seen.—ALLAN BROOKS, *Okanagan Landing, British Columbia, November 25, 1921.*

The Black Vulture in Colorado.—On October 8 or 9, 1921, two young schoolboys, Richard Harvey and a boy named Baer, captured alive, on the foothills near Boulder, an adult male Black Vulture (*Coragyps urubu urubu*), breaking its wing. They tied it in a neighbor's yard to keep it alive until the University of Colorado Museum preparator returned from a short trip, but the neighbor turned it loose just out of town. A few days later two other boys, Elvin Watson and James Mitchell, found it dead in a ditch and brought it to the Museum, where its skin is now preserved. So far as I know there is no published record of this species for Colorado, and it is particularly interesting to find the first one for the state so far north. In 1900 Professor W. W. Cooke, in his Second Appendix to *The Birds of Colorado* (page 204), stated that the Black Vulture "has been taken in Western Kansas and probably will some time be found as a rare summer visitant in Southeastern Colorado"; but Boulder is 270 miles northwest of the southeastern corner of the state.—JUNIUS HENDERSON, *University of Colorado, Boulder, October 25, 1921.*

A Winter Record of the Kern Red-wing.—An adult male Red-winged Blackbird (cf. C 590, collection of D. R. Dickey) taken by van Rossem near Corona, Riverside County, on December 8, 1915, is strictly comparable with breeding specimens from Walker Basin, Kern County, and indicates a possible winter range for the race *Agelaius phoeniceus aciculatus*. The bill measurements are as follows: Culmen from base 25.9 millimeters (plus about 1 mm. broken off); bill from nostril 17.5 (broken as above); gonys 16.0; width at base 9.5; depth at base 9.5. This specimen was submitted to Mr. Joseph Mailliard, who concurs with us in our determination of its status.

During a recent trip in Kern County, two days (August 31 to September 1, 1921) were spent at Walker Basin, but not one red-wing was seen. Neither were any in evidence along the Kern River between Onyx and Isabella, where the types of *aciculatus* were taken. This would argue a departure from the breeding grounds immediately after the nesting season. Just what the winter range of this form is will probably not be ascertained for some time. The total number of individuals probably does not anywhere nearly reach a thousand. Such a number would form a very small proportion of the swarms of red-wings wintering in the lowlands and the taking of one would be very much a matter of luck.—D. R. DICKEY and A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Pasadena, California, November 26, 1921.*

Bird Fatalities Resulting from a Shipwreck.—During the night of October 25, 1918, the Canadian Pacific Steamer "Princess Sophia" was wrecked with total loss of life, on Vanderbilt Reef, Lynn Canal, Alaska, some forty miles north of Juneau. Quantities of heavy fuel oil escaping covered the water for miles about, finally settling on the beaches. It is the writer's theory that the great loss of life, some 343 persons, was largely occasioned by the escaping oil.

When patrolling the shores of Admiralty Island and adjacent waters in a small steamer on October 28, looking for bodies from the wreck, a Murre (*Uria troille californica*) was seen swimming towards the vessel, occasionally assisting its feet with its wings. On coming close it was seen that its breast was heavily saturated with oil, and the wings and other parts to only a lesser degree. The bird came to within a few feet of the boat, which was then drifting, frequently raising itself on the water, shaking itself, and flapping its wings in efforts to get rid of the oil, and occasionally preening its feathers with its beak. The bird seemed not only devoid of fear but actually to wish companionship or a stable place to rest. Threatening movements only caused it to dive a few feet away, barely under the surface of the water, which gave excellent opportunity to observe the use of the wings in assisting the feet in the diving. It was finally killed

with an oar, and on examination its plumage was found to be saturated with crude oil, particularly on the breast and wings. No injuries were in evidence and its plight was apparently due entirely to the oil.

Numerous other Murres were noted at no great distances, all more or less covered with the oil, which covered the surface of the water from a mere film to a heavy scum. The men who were patrolling the beaches for bodies of the wreck victims reported that there were many of "the same kind of birds" (Murres) dead and dying on the beaches, and frequently the searchers were startled by a bird still alive suddenly struggling and flopping about at their feet. Also, many gulls were observed to have stained breasts, but none were seen to be helpless. On October 30, when about 120 miles south of the scene of the disaster (near Cape Fanshaw), on a passenger steamer, the writer observed one gull with oil-stained breast join the ship for a distance. On January 1, 1919, at Wrangell, nearly two hundred miles south of the wreck, the writer observed a Glaucous-winged Gull (*Larus glaucescens*) walking about the streets, with a spot of discoloration about four inches in diameter on breast and sides that bore every evidence of being crude oil stain and quite possibly came from the wreck to the north in the preceding October.

The extent of the losses among the bird population due to this accident can not even be approximated, but it must have been considerable, as the wreck occurred a short distance north of waters much frequented by Murres, and prevailing winds and tides drove the oil southward for many miles. The twenty-three miles under observation on October 28 were from twenty-two to forty-five miles from the scene of the wreck with considerable shoreline intervening, so there is a good reason to believe that the fatalities to the birds that came under observation of the writer's party were but a small percentage of the total.—ERNEST P. WALKER, *Phoenix, Arizona, March 7, 1920.*

Number of Birds Described as New from California.—The undersigned has prepared a manuscript list of all the birds described from California. Species have been excluded where the type in all probability did not come from within the confines of the present state of California. Even so, it is found that 205 new names have been proposed for birds from California in the strict sense. But 45 of these specific or subspecific names have subsequently proven to be ill founded; in other words they are now considered as synonyms. Therefore 160 valid forms out of the total of 576 at this moment credited to the state list have been described from California—about 28 percent.

Furthermore, it is found that 51 different persons have participated in this sort of ornithological activity. As to responsibility of authors for new names: Grinnell has proposed 38, of which 6 are synonyms; Ridgway 28, with 8 synonyms; Oberholser 13, with 4 synonyms; Cassin 13, with one synonym; Vigors 11, with 4 synonyms; Baird 8, with 3 synonyms; Swarth 6, with no synonyms; Lawrence 5, with 1 synonym; Gambel 5, with 1 synonym; McGregor 5, with 1 synonym; etc. The rest of the 51 authors have named four or fewer real or supposed new forms.

It might be expected that the earlier describers, working at a time when "most everything was new" and when only "full species" were recognized, would have made the best "score", that is, the highest ratio of valid names to total names proposed. However, note that Vigors (1839) made but 63 percent, the lowest ratio among those who have proposed more than ten new names. The best score among those who have launched ten names or more was made by Cassin, 91 percent. A score of 100 percent is to be credited to Xantus, Henshaw, C. H. Townsend, Mearns, and Swarth, among those who have proposed from 3 to 6 new names. Is it to be inferred that the larger the number of names launched the greater the chances of slipping up?

There are numerous factors which enter into the game of species naming, upon which success will depend. Some of these factors are: availability of comparative material, knowledge of the literature, degree of development of the geographic sense, knowledge of plumages and of the meanings of variations, and discriminative acumen. While some of these may in more or less degree be matters of luck, yet in the long run personal qualifications like industry, concentrativeness and caution will figure largely. In systematics it is woefully easy, but forever a discredit, to launch synonyms. There is far less excuse for it now, with abundance of material and well indexed literature, than

in the days of Vigors.—J. GRINNELL, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, December 5, 1921.*

The White Gyrfalcon in Montana.—A bird as rare in the United States as the White Gyrfalcon (*Falco islandus*) seems worthy of recording whenever found and correctly identified. The specimen under consideration I believe has not been put on record up to the present date. It was sent to Mr. Oscar Gard, of Seattle, Washington, by Mr. Geo. B. Daniels, of Fort Benton, Montana. Mr. Benton writes that he shot the bird on November 18, 1917, on Shonkin Creek, just east of the town of Shonkin and about twenty miles from Fort Benton, Montana. When shot it was sitting on a post of a wire fence in very open country. The bird was in an advanced condition of decay by the time it reached Mr. Gard, who nevertheless made it into a very handsome specimen and it is now in my collection. Unfortunately the sex was not taken, but the extremely large size leaves practically no doubt that it is a female. It is very white and must have been fully adult, and is unquestionably one of the most beautiful birds that I have ever seen.—J. HOOPER BOWLES, *Tacoma, Washington, November 7, 1921.*

A Specimen of the Markham Petrel.—Mr. Chas. Fagan, chief wireless operator on the SS. "Santa Elisa," W. R. Grace and Co., has forwarded to the Biological Survey a petrel that proves to be the Markham Petrel, *Oceanodroma markhami* (Salvin). The bird was captured July 6, 1921, at sea off the coast of Peru at a point approximately thirty-five miles north of the port of Callao. *Oceanodroma markhami*, very close allied to *tristrami*, is distinguished from that bird by shorter tarsus, smaller foot, and somewhat more ashy tinge of the back and head. It differs from *O. melania* in more slender bill and in the grayish cast of the dorsal surface. Measurements of the present specimen are as follows: wing 175.5 mm.; tail 95 mm.; chord of exposed culmen 18 mm.; tarsus 23.3 mm.; middle toe with claw 23.5 mm.; outer toe with claw 22.5 mm.

The Markham Petrel was described by Salvin (Proc. Zool. Soc. London, 1883, p. 430) from a female specimen taken by Captain Markham in December, 1881, near the coast of Peru at lat. 19° 40' S., long. 75° W. (given incorrectly in the Cat. Birds Brit. Mus., xxv, 1896, p. 354, as lat. 10° 40' S.). A second specimen, also a female, was secured in the same region at lat. 23° S., long. 73° W. Loomis (Proc. California Acad. Sci., 4th ser., II, pt. II, p. 174) records two taken by R. H. Beck, one on August 1, 1905, in lat. 13° 28' N., long. 108° 52' W., and another September 1, 1905, near lat. 5° N., long. 87° W., about thirty miles south of Cocos Island. Captain R. Paefslser (Journ. Ornith., 1913, p. 49; 1914, p. 277) has published notes on the occurrence of this species on the west coast of South America but apparently merely from sight observation (no mention is made of specimens) so that his notes must be considered as open to doubt. The specimen secured by Mr. Fagan is of great interest as it is the first Markham Petrel that has come to the United States National Museum, and seems to constitute the fifth example of the species that has been recorded.—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *Biological Survey, U. S. Dept. Agriculture, November 21, 1921.*

Possible Occurrence of the Blue-footed Booby in Southern California.—A *Sula* of this type was seen by Mr. Edward J. Brown and the writer, between Anaheim Landing and Sunset Beach, Orange County, California, on October 25, 1921. It came from the ocean and made a complete circle around us at a distance of about a hundred yards. While ordinarily opposed to the publication of sight records, it seems to me permissible in this case; for a bird exhibiting such striking coloration and flight could hardly be mistaken for anything else. No claim is made for admission to the state list of the above species as we, of course, cannot say further than that it was a black and white *Sula*. As *S. nebouxi*, according to the A. O. U. Check-list, breeds in the Gulf of Lower California, the bird probably belonged to that form.—A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Los Angeles, California, November 5, 1921.*

Summer Record of Blue-winged Teal in California, and Notes on Other Birds.—On May 21, 1921, at Buena Vista Lake, Kern County, California, I saw a pair of Blue-winged Teal (*Querquedula discors*) the male of which I secured. On sexing it I found

the testes fully enlarged, indicating, though not conclusively, that the pair might have been breeding in the vicinity. Winter records of this duck are not common and I can find no previous summer record.

A pair of San Diego Song Sparrows (*Melospiza melodia cooperi*) was seen on February 8, 1920, carrying nesting materials into the center of a clump of honeysuckle vines growing on our side fence in the city of Los Angeles. The next day I examined the clump and found a nest nearly completed. The first egg was laid February 15. I did not look at the nest again until February 22, when I found the one egg and the broken empty shell of another. Soon after this, heavy rains came on and the nest was deserted. Nor did the sparrows attempt to use the nest again or the nesting site that year.

During a trip of two weeks, October 16 to November 2, 1921, down the coast from San Francisco to Los Angeles, I made stops of a few days each at Moss Landing, Monterey County, Pismo, San Luis Obispo County, Goleta, Santa Barbara County, and Point Mugu, Ventura County. It was interesting to note the great abundance of Red Phalaropes (*Phalaropus fulicarius*), but the unusual fact was the large numbers of sick, dead and dying birds. I shot birds of this species that appeared strong and active but, in most cases, they were as much emaciated as the dead ones I picked up on the beach.

At Ludlow, San Bernardino County, April 17, 1921, I observed in the course of an afternoon at a corral where there were a water trough and two or three small cottonwood trees, sixteen species of birds, among which were two pairs of the Lark Bunting (*Calamospiza melanocorys*), one pair of which I collected. This place is located deep in the Mohave Desert, but the water and a few shade trees seem to attract quite a number of birds.—CHESTER C. LAMB, *Los Angeles, November 22, 1921.*

Corrections of Errors in Pacific Coast Avifauna no. 14.—*Asio wilsonianus*. Long-eared Owl. On page 68, for "Stevensville, Ravalli County, April 14, 1912, 2 eggs," read Corvallis, instead of Stevensville.

Junco hyemalis mearnsi. Pink-sided Junco. "It has also been found . . . in the Bitterroot Valley in migration"; and "Corvallis, March 22, 1913" (page 128). This specimen was taken May 22 instead of March 22, which would bring it in the breeding season instead of in migration. The exact locality was eight miles east of Corvallis at 4500 feet elevation, in heavy yellow pine and Douglas fir forest.—BERNARD BAILEY, *Elk River, Minnesota, October 10, 1921.*

An Inland Occurrence of the Common Tern.—A male of the year of the Common Tern (*Sterna hirundo*) was taken by van Rossem at Victorville, San Bernardino County, California, on September 22, 1921. When shot, it was on a sandbar in the Mohave River, in company with a few Killdeer. No other terns were observed during the eight days spent in that vicinity.—D. R. DICKEY and A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Pasadena, California, November 25, 1921.*

Burrowing Owl off the Virginia Coast.—While on depth-charge watch at night just out of Hampton Roads enroute to New York, October 22, 1918, I observed a small owl which for four hours flew about the quarter-deck of the vessel but eluded capture. The next morning a marine caught the bird perched on one of the depth-charges, and on examination it proved to be a Burrowing Owl (*Speotyto cunicularia*). It was very docile and eagerly gulped down pieces of raw beef fed by hand. As the marine wished to take it ashore as a pet I was unable to secure it, and though I positively identified it as a Burrowing Owl I could not determine its subspecific characters. One would, however, presuppose the Florida bird (*Speotyto cunicularia floridana*), rather than our western representative. At all events its appearance so far from its known range seems worthy of record even at this late date.—WM. DUNCAN STRONG, *Berkeley, California, November 30, 1921.*

Rare Birds in Arizona and New Mexico.—Harris Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus harrisi*). While on an auto trip through Arizona I took an adult male on the Superior Highway about fifteen miles east of Mesa, Arizona, on March 15, 1921. Three were seen together in the giant cactus association. I have never been able to find this species in southwestern New Mexico.

Heermann Gull (*Larus heermanni*). An adult male was brought to me on March 20, 1919. It had been found dead on Pinos Altos Mountain, nine miles north of Silver City. On making up the skin I found the bird to be in very poor flesh, and a small shot found in its body indicated that it had been crippled, probably on one of the small irrigation ponds south of here. Mrs. Florence Merriam Bailey advises me that this is a new record for New Mexico.

Great-tailed Grackle (*Megaquiscalus major macrourus*). I took an adult male May 24, 1920, on an irrigation pond on the Mimbres River, thirty miles southeast of here. No others could be found at this time or on several subsequent trips. Mrs. Bailey advises me that the only other records for the state are of a specimen taken at Las Cruces May 15, 1913, and a report of a pair nesting at La Mesa.

Chimney Swift (*Chaetura pelagica*). A female was taken May 22, 1921, on the Mimbres River, thirty miles southeast of here, in Luna County. It was flying alone at about six p. m. Wing measures 127.1 mm., and tail 42.4 mm. I am indebted to J. Eugene Law for identification and measurements.—R. T. KELLOGG, *Silver City, New Mexico, October 24, 1921.*

Notes on the Voice of the California Screech Owl.—The following notes and observations were made in the vicinity of Palo Alto, California, from June 1 to November 1, 1921.

The California Screech Owl (*Otus asio bendirei*) is a very tame and friendly bird. At times one can be approached to within arm's length. One curious fact is that when a light is put full in the face, at distances ranging from five to twenty feet, the bird does not seem to be in the least blinded, but looks over and past the light, and stares at the face of the observer. The eyes do not ordinarily glow, but are very distinct, the pupil and iris standing out in strong contrast. On only one occasion have I seen this rule broken. The owl in this case was within five feet, and on the same level with the light. It looked steadily at my face, over the light, but its eyes glowed with a soft honey color.

I have divided the calls under six separate headings, but there are a great many more, as they shade off into each other a good deal. The six noted here, however, are always clear and distinct. The first is the familiar, soft, quavering, "oo-oo-oo", known to nearly everyone. It is generally repeated steadily and monotonously. It seems to be a call of contentment, given when the bird is full fed.

The second is the same as the first, but with a soft whistling undertone, such as is produced by whistling with the edge of a card against the lips. I have heard this call only during the breeding season. It seems to be used to call another bird. On several occasions I have found a pair of the birds sitting side by side, one of them, presumably the male, giving this call, while the other answered with a sharp whistle. The two calls were exchanged, back and forth, for some time as though the birds were carrying on a conversation.

Number three is a liquid, clucking, "prit, prit", which seems to indicate curiosity. It is sometimes accompanied by a snapping of the beak. One bird swooped at me on several consecutive nights, going over my head and snapping his bill fiercely as he passed. I finally turned my light on him when at the bottom of his swoop and within arm's length, which seemed to disconcert him, as he flew into a neighboring tree and began to cluck and snap his beak.

The fourth is a loud clear scream, a most blood-curdling sound. It may be said to resemble the screeching of an enraged cat. I have heard it on only one occasion. It was repeated several times on the night of August 7, 1921, though whether by the same individual each time I could not determine. When I approached the tree from which the screaming came, the owl dropped into the inquiring, "prit, prit".

Number five is a guttural croaking, sounding exactly like the croaking of a heron. I have heard this call on only two occasions. The first time I was unable to get my light on the bird, and thought it a night heron, but the second time I saw the owl plainly. The call consists of only a single note.

The sixth is a high pitched, whining note resembling the crying of a puppy.

The first three calls are the most common. In fact after midnight there is nearly always an owl within hearing giving one of the calls. They can and do change from

one call to another and back again. During the breeding season they do not seem to have any regular hunting ground, but when the young are grown they become solitary, and do not go very far from home. Although they are very plentiful and I have spent much time in observing them, I have never been able to find a nest, or the hole of a solitary individual. They make good pets, eating raw meat, or mice, and becoming quite tame. When irritated they make comical efforts at defence, throwing themselves on their backs, snapping their beaks and grasping with the claws. They are too small to be serious antagonists, however. One which I kept for some time would "sing".—PAUL BONNOT, *Stanford University, California, November 7, 1921.*

Early Nesting of the Tricolored Blackbird and Mallard.—At Walker Basin, Kern County, California, on April 2, 1921, van Rossem made note of the following nestings which so far antedate anything published that a record of them is in order.

Agelaius tricolor. Colony of about twenty pairs in an old dead tule patch. From one fresh to four eggs incubated were noted, and one female was seen carrying food, probably to small young.

Anas platyrhynchos. Nest with eight apparently fresh eggs in a clump of grass near the small stream which winds about and through the meadow.

These dates would be early even for the lowlands, but seem extraordinarily so for this mountain meadow where the temperature was close to freezing at night, and where several inches of snow fell on the night of the 3rd of April.—D. R. DICKEY and A. J. VAN ROSSEM, *Pasadena, California, November 25, 1921.*

A Correction: Brewer Blackbird Not Occurring in Northern British Columbia.—In the *Condor* for March, 1919 (vol. 21, p. 33), under the title of The Summer Birds of Hazelton, British Columbia, I recorded the common nesting and the taking of two specimens of the Brewer Blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*). At the instigation of Mr. H. S. Swarth, I recently re-examined these birds. They consist of an adult male and a young bird in post-juvenile plumage. The adult is worn and dull and shows more purple reflection on the head than is usual in the Rusty Blackbird. The juvenile shows no indication at all of the rust so characteristic of the first winter plumage of that species. The measurements, however, are plain, and, in spite of superficial resemblances to *cyanocephalus*, I am compelled to reconsider my first too hasty conclusion and re-identify both birds as Rusty Blackbirds (*Euphagus carolinus*). There is, therefore, at present no record of the Brewer Blackbird in that section of British Columbia. In extenuation of my apparent carelessness I would like to state that at the time of writing the above paper the Rusty Blackbird had not been recorded as breeding in the Province and its occurrence there was unexpected.—P. A. TAVERNER, *Ottawa, Ontario, November 21, 1921.*

A Pigmy Owl Bathing.—On September 28, 1921, while camping at the easterly end of Kneeland Prairie, Humboldt County, California, in company with Mr. Chester C. Lamb, the latter came in from a tramp in the woods with the report that he had seen a Coast Pigmy Owl (*Glaucidium gnoma grinnelli*) taking a bath. He described the bird as standing on the edge of a small cattle trough beside the trail and going through the process of ablution in about the same manner as any other bird. The trough was full to the brim and the little owl was dipping and dabbling in the water, finally shaking itself and preening its feathers. Later the bird was secured and proved to be a male still in partial moult, with few but pin-feathers on the throat.

Several ornithologists to whom I mentioned this matter said that they had never before heard of an owl bathing and had never accredited this bird with a desire for such a performance. Mr. Chase Littlejohn tells me, however, that at one time he had several Barn Owls (*Tyto pratincola*) in captivity for a short period and discovered that they were very fond of a bath. They were kept in a rather dark place to which they quickly grew accustomed, soon becoming quite tame. He used to watch them a good deal, to study their habits and attitudes, and frequently saw them bathing in a large vessel of water maintained for their use. Apparently they bathed every day; for if there were days in which he did not actually see them bathe he almost invariably noticed some sign of their having done so, either in the way of wet feathers, water on the floor, or at least some token.

Possibly owls usually bathe at night when no one would be likely to see them, which may account for our lack of knowledge on this point.—JOSEPH MAILLIARD, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, December 5, 1921.*

The California Brown Pelican in the State of Washington.—The status of the California Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus californicus*) in the state of Washington seems, hitherto, to be founded altogether upon sight records and one or two mounted specimens that are supposed to have been collected in the state. The sight records were made by Suckley and other old time observers, while the mounted birds are even more uncertain, if possible, for proper scientific work.

It is with pleasure, therefore, that I am able to place on record a fine example of this bird that was turned over to me in the flesh a few days ago. It was collected on October 30, 1921, by Mr. Roger Evans, of Kapowsin, Washington. The locality was Lake Kapowsin, which is situated among the eastern foothills of the Cascade Mountains, and about one hundred and twenty miles from the Pacific Ocean. It was alone and no more were seen; neither have I had any other reported from elsewhere. The appearance of the bird so far from salt water may be accounted for by the fact that an unusually severe storm of several days duration took place just prior to its capture. Mr. Evans very kindly turned the bird over to us for the use of science, and it is now in the collection of Mr. D. E. Brown, in Seattle, Washington. It is an immature male, and presumably a bird of the present year.—J. HOOPER BOWLES, *Tacoma, Washington, November 7, 1921.*

The "Anthony Vireo" Not a Tenable Subspecies.—*Vireo huttoni obscurus* Anthony has held its place as a valid subspecies in both the second (1895) and the third (1910) editions of the A. O. U. Check-List. Also Ridgway recognized it in Part III (1904) of his Birds of North and Middle America.

In April, 1921, I had the chance of examining the type skin of this supposed race in the ornithological collection of the Carnegie Museum at Pittsburgh. This type, apparently not hitherto recorded, is now no. 16981, Carnegie Mus.; female; Beaverton, Oregon; March 20, 1890; orig. no. 2671, A. W. Anthony. I compared it with the other material in the Carnegie collection, and came to the conclusion that the name *obscurus* does not apply to a tenable race.

It happens that this same conclusion had been come to by Rhoads years ago (see Auk, x, July, 1893, pp. 238-241). And it seems, according to Rhoads, that Anthony himself had come to doubt the validity of *obscurus*. It is curious that these circumstances did not seem to weigh against the acceptance of the name in the 1895 A. O. U. Check-List.

Anthony, in his original description of *obscurus* (Zoe, i, December, 1890, pp. 307-308), was, I think, misled by the seasonal conditions of coloration. The "rich suffusion of olive and yellowish tints" emphasized as the main character of *obscurus* is common to birds in fresh, or at least unfaded, plumage from throughout the range of *Vireo huttoni huttoni*. Those vivid tints are fugitive, and they go fastest and most completely in sunny as compared with cloudy climates; there is geographic variation in rate of fading (see Grinnell, Auk, xix, April, 1902, pp. 128-131). Southern California birds lose the "blush" of the new plumage sooner and more completely than birds of western Oregon. But as far as I can now see, from a repeated examination of the extensive material in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, the intrinsic color tone is very nearly the same all the way from Washington (a bird at hand from Tacoma) to San Diego County, California. I was misled in precisely the same way Anthony was, when I described the supposed form *mailliardorum* from Santa Cruz Island (see Condor, v, November, 1903, p. 157), and evidently Bishop was similarly confused when he named *oberholseri* (Condor, vii, September, 1905, pp. 142-143) from San Diego County!

Now, Rhoads (loco citato) did not stop with showing that *obscurus* was untenable; he described a new race of his own, *insularis*, from the southern end of Vancouver Island. He had but three specimens, two of which he made the "types". These, as compared with *huttoni*, he describes as showing "over the whole plumage" a "sooty suffusion". I am tempted to suggest that these may have been town-smoked birds. Hutton Vireos from Vancouver Island are notably rare in collections. In the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology there are but two, both from Victoria. Both are dark as compared with

Monterey *huttoni*; but both look to me to be smoked. I wouldn't care to rest the case for or against *insularis* on this scanty material. But before this name is given formal recognition by the A. O. U. Committee on Nomenclature, perfectly fresh, unfaded material should be available in fair quantity.—J. GRINNELL, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Berkeley, California, December 5, 1921.*

Some Hawks of Harney Valley, Oregon.—My work in the United States Biological Survey has taken me into Harney County, Oregon, several times during the last two years. On every visit I have been impressed by the abundance and variety of hawks in this district, and I have kept rough notes regarding these birds. A few of these notes are presented. In 1919, for a week beginning September 12, there was an amazing mixed flight of hawks in which Cooper Hawks, Prairie Falcons, and Duck Hawks were conspicuous. During this week, I saw at least a dozen Duck Hawks, more than equal to all of my other records. The following notes were made during these trips.

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura septentrionalis*). Turkey Vultures were common in the valley, but my attention was particularly drawn to them during August, 1919, when trying summer poisons on jack rabbits. Such numbers of vultures, ravens, crows, and magpies descended on the fields where the poisoning operations were carried on as to make it necessary to reach there before daylight in order to count the poisoned rabbits. From fifty to one hundred each of ravens and vultures usually arrived by daylight, accompanied by several times that number of crows and magpies.

Marsh Hawk (*Circus hudsonius*). Marsh Hawks have been common and even abundant on each of my visits to the valley. I have often seen them worrying the jack rabbits but have yet to see them catch one.

Sharp-shinned Hawk (*Accipiter velox*). A few of these little hawks were included in the flight of September, 1919.

Cooper Hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*). This species was one of the most conspicuous in numbers in the September flight mentioned above. Most of those observed were not yet in adult plumage. They were astonishingly tame, sitting on fence posts and telephone poles while we drove by in a car. While the larger hawks frequently do this, my previous experience with this species has been entirely to the contrary.

Western Red-tail (*Buteo borealis calurus*). This is a common species, found on every visit to the valley.

Swainson Hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*). This is the most common species in the valley. On May 24, 1920, twenty-seven Swainson Hawks were counted sitting on the posts along one side of a small alfalfa field near Burns. Several had Oregon ground squirrels in their talons and most of them seemed to be resting after a hearty meal. The field was swarming with squirrels, and catching all that was necessary for food was apparently an easy task for these hawks.

Rough-legged Hawk (*Archibuteo lagopus sancti-johannis*). A few of these hawks were seen on October 24-30, 1920. Judging from the number observed in adjoining districts during the winter they probably increased considerably later in the season.

Ferruginous Rough-leg (*Archibuteo ferrugineus*). On May 24, 1920, Stanley G. Jewett and myself saw at close range an adult hawk of this species, the only one noted in the valley at any time.

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*). Golden Eagles are common in Harney Valley, and abundant compared to their number in any other district with which I am familiar. I have had as many as five in sight at one time. On September 13, 1919, I watched two in pursuit of five Canada Geese. The eagles were considerably behind and high above the geese, which were making frantic efforts to reach a pond known as Potter Swamp. The eagles were gaining rapidly, but all disappeared over a ridge before the chase was finished. A few days after this, three were seen harrying a jack rabbit which they caught and killed; all three were near the dead rabbit when we passed along the road in a car. On October 26, 1920, two eagles and a number of magpies were found feeding on poisoned rabbits.

Prairie Falcon (*Falco mexicanus*). This hawk is common in the valley and was particularly so during September, 1919. One female followed our car along the road for some distance until finally killed by a well-directed shot. Apparently, she was after the birds flushed by the car from the sage brush along the road.

Duck Hawk (*Falco peregrinus anatum*). About a dozen Duck Hawks were seen during the September flight. On the thirteenth, a flock of Cinnamon Teal whizzed past my head as I stood on the bank of Silvies River. They were traveling at a terrific rate of speed, but not until they had passed did I see the Duck Hawk close behind. Within a few seconds after passing me it struck one of the teal, and made for a nearby cliff with its victim. On August 24, late in the evening, while with a companion trying to secure a yellow-headed blackbird, a Duck Hawk darted viciously into a flock of blackbirds. As it was about to strike, it saw me and swung over my companion who brought it down as it passed overhead. It proved to be a fine adult male.

Pigeon Hawk (*Falco columbarius columbarius*). An immature female bird was secured on September 16, 1919, as it flew over.

Desert Sparrow Hawk (*Falco sparverius phalaena*). This is very common during September and October; it is less so in May and June, but is in evidence along the roads every day.—IRA N. GABRIELSON, *Portland, Oregon, October 24, 1921.*

The Validity of the Catalina Island Quail.—A series of sixteen quail from Catalina Island, of which thirteen are winter and three are fresh fall specimens, was recently examined by us. These bear out precisely the characters as given by J. Grinnell in his description of the form *Lophortyx [californica] catalinensis*, in *The Auk*, vol. 23, 1906, pp. 262-265. An additional character to which we wish to call attention is the wing formula of *catalinensis* as compared with *vallicola*. In *catalinensis*, the seventh primary is longest in thirteen out of the sixteen (or 81.25 percent), and the seventh and sixth are equal and longest in the remaining three (or 18.75 percent). The eighth primary is equal to or longer than the fifth in exactly the same high proportion. In a series of seventeen *vallicola*, from the San Diegan district, the seventh primary is longest in only three birds (or 17.65 percent), the remaining fourteen having the sixth, sixth and seventh, or fifth, sixth, and seventh longest. The eighth is equal to or longer than the fifth in only four (or 23.53 percent). It will thus be seen that the Island wing is the more pointed of the two. The wing formula of *L. californica californica* seems to be quite similar to that of *catalinensis*; but as most of our birds are moulting, we cannot be positive on this point.

Three birds from the southern San Joaquin Valley agree in some particulars of coloration with those from Catalina, namely, in color of flanks and broad striping on under tail coverts. However, the resemblance ceases here, for they are quite as small as the average *vallicola* from the San Diegan district (see Grinnell, *Auk*, vol. 23, p. 263). The one available quail from Los Coronados Islands (collection of H. Wright) has the small foot and bill of *vallicola*, but is too badly worn to give any comparative color values.

Catalinensis is a perfectly valid race and is quite as well differentiated from *vallicola* as is *vallicola* from *californica* proper. The pronounced characters preclude the possibility of artificial introduction, and it is difficult to understand why it has not been given equal standing with other insular forms, such as the horned larks and song sparrows, not to mention the San Clemente House Finch!—D. R. DICKEY and A. J. VAN ROSEM, *Pasadena, California, November 26, 1921.*

Virginia Rail and Flamulated Screech Owl in the San Bernardino Mountains.—On July 16, 1921, and again on the 17th, a Virginia Rail (*Rallus virginianus*) was seen near the mouth of Rathbun Creek, Big Bear Lake. It was feeding in marshy ground beside the road, and when passed in an auto could be closely observed. When we returned on foot, however, we could not find it.

On July 17 and 18, both morning and evening, the peculiar, ventriloquial, notes of the Flamulated Screech Owl (*Otus flammeolus*) were heard in the vicinity of the I S Ranch, Big Bear Lake; and on the 19th and 20th we heard the same notes at the Fish Hatchery at the north base of Sugarloaf Mountain. We did not succeed in seeing any of the producers of these strange calls at either place, repeating our experience with this species at Dry Lake, July, 1920, where we failed on three evenings to catch sight of one.—JOHN MCB. ROBERTSON, *Buena Park, California, December 4, 1921.*